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SUFİ M. R. BENGALĒE

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## The Ahmadiyya Movement

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and the expected Messenger of all nations. In the spirit and power of all the earlier prophets, he came to serve and re-interpret the final and eternal teaching laid down by God in the Holy Quran. The Movement therefore represents the **True and Real Islam** and seeks to uplift humanity and to establish peace throughout the world. Hazrat Ahmad died in 1908, and the present Head of the Movement is his second successor, Hazrat Mirza Bashirud-Din Mahmud Ahmad under whose directions the Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world, the following being the addresses of some of them:

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The Tomb of Jesus



(See Pages 7-14)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 اِنْ الَّذِيْنَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اَسْلَاحٌ

## Five Verses from the Holy Quran

### Transliteration

1. Yusabbihu lillahi ma fi ssammati wa ma fil-ardhi; lahu-l-mulku wa lahu-l-hamdu; wahua ala kulli shai-in Qadeer. (LXIV-1)
2. Allahu la ilaha illa hu-wa, ala-llahi fal-yatawakkalil muminoon. (LXIV-13)
3. Fa-amma-llazeena amanoo wa amilu-ssa lihati fa yudkhilu-hum Rabbu-hum Fee-Rahmatih. Zalika hu-al fawzul mubeen. (XLV-30)
4. Wa yut-yimoonat-ta-ama ala hubbihi miskeenana wa yatiman wa Ascera. (LXXVI-8)
5. Innama nut-yimukum li-wajhillahi la nureedu minkum jaza-an wa-la shukura. (LXXVI-9)

### Translation

1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth proclaimeth the holiness of God; unto Him belongeth the kingdom and unto Him is due all praise, and He hath power over all things. (LXIV-1)
2. God, there is none worthy of worship besides Him. In God, therefore, let the faithful put their trust. (LXIV-13)
3. Then, as for those who believe and do good deeds, their Lord will bring them in unto His mercy. That is the manifest victory. (XLV-30)
4. And they (the servants of God) give food unto the poor, the orphan and the captive, for love of Him. (LXXVI-8)
5. (Saying): We feed you, for the sake of God only, we desire no reward nor thanks, from you. (LXXVI-9)

من احاديث الرسول

## The Sayings of the Master Prophet Muhammad

Abdullah Ibn Masud relates that the Holy Prophet said, "The man who entertains even a jot or tittle of pride in his heart will not be admitted into heaven." Some one asked "people naturally love to have good clothes and good shoes. Is that pride too?" The Holy Prophet replied, "No, it is not. God is beautiful and loves beauty. Pride consists in rejecting the truth and in looking down upon others." (Muslim)

Anas reports that the Holy Prophet said, "O Allah, there is no joy save in the spiritual life." (Bukhari)

It is related on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Omar that a certain person asked the Holy Prophet, "Oh Prophet of Allah, what is the best teaching of Islam?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Feed the hungry and greet everyone with the greeting of peace whether you know him or not." (Bukhari)

Abu Sayeed reports, "Once upon a time we were in the company of the Holy Prophet on one of his journeys. Suddenly a man who was riding a she-camel appeared before us and began to look around, seeking for help. At this the Holy Prophet said "Anybody who has an animal to ride upon more than he needs must give it to him who has none. Anybody who has provision for his journey over and above his needs, must give it to him who is in want of it." In this way, the Holy Prophet mentioned all the different kinds of wealth till it was made clear to us that no one should keep with him his surplus wealth but give it in charity to the poor and needy." (Muslim)

It is related on the authority of Muadh, who is reported to have heard the Holy Prophet say: "God says that those who will love one another for the sake of My glory, will occupy a high place in Heaven upon which My light will shine. Even the prophets and the martyrs will be envious of that." (Tirmudhi)

# The Lode Star

(Excerpt)

By Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad  
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi  
1836-1908

**AHMAD AND MUHAMMAD**

The Holy Prophet Muhammad's glorification of God consisted in his complete attachment to Him in preference to his own desires, and in his sincere, genuine and single-minded solicitude for Him. God, as a reward, returned all those praises to the Holy Prophet himself. Such indeed is God's way of dealing with His chosen devotees. He turns His praiser into the praised. The Holy Prophet accordingly becomes the praised one both in the earth and in the heavens. This incident bears a moral for all true devotees and a happy promise for all who praise God, namely that God returns to the praiser all his praises and makes him the fitting subject of the same. The praiser then becomes the praised one in the earth and his acceptance spreads in the land. Every good soul then begins to echo his praise. This is the stage of perfection of true devotion and the goal of all pure souls. This stage is recognized by none save those possessed of spiritual insight. This is the purpose of the life of man and the highest aim of his devotions. This stage marks the end of the ambition of all saints and the termination of the journey of all true seekers. This is the stage wherein God brings to perfection the souls of His elect. This is the purpose of the Law and the ultimate end of all religious exercises. This is the gist of all the messages borne to the Holy Prophet by the Angel Gabriel. Let us, therefore, invoke peace and blessings upon the Holy Prophet.

The state described above is the end for which all spiritual strivers put forth their efforts, as well as those who detach themselves from the world for the tent of His love, who live by God alone and die for His sake, who place their entire reliance upon Him, who submit to His will in perfect integrity of soul and carry out His commands with tears in their eyes and forget themselves in their search after His pleasure, who die at His loss and live with His countenance, who for

His sake leave their nightly beds and engage themselves in devotion, and pass their nights standing or prostrate before Him and are never forgotten; and who when they feel restless remember their Friend with weepings and tears and in the watches of the night mutter their complaints and breathe their sighs. Nobody knows which way these strivers are being driven and how they are being directed. Disasters befall them and they bear them with patience. They are cast into fire and the word comes "peace" and they are saved. These are the true extollers of His praise, His near ones, and accessories to His secrets.

Bless them! They and their associates are the elect ones who have been privileged to intercede and whose intercession has been accepted. This is a dignity not granted to any save the favoured ones of God. It was to explain this state that Islam made its advent. It came to save men from the pit of destruction, and to lead them to the precincts of sanctity and to the further stage of attained blessedness. It came to warn the heedless that the sword is ever ready which will cut them off.

Little indeed do men know in what true praise and glorification of God consists, and why it is held in such high esteem. To realize its worth it is enough to remember that God has opened the Holy Quran with His praise, so that men may know its supreme importance. This praise can never swell in any human heart save with the complete melting of one's soul and entire self-effacement and can never be truly realized till the serpent of passions has been crushed and the cloak of selfishness has been put off. Nor can this praise move any human tongue but that the fire of love should first be kindled in the heart. Nay, it can never take shape until the traces of all false gods have first been completely effaced from the heart, and until the man has been entirely consumed in the fire of love for true God. The man, who casts himself in this fire, and has his heart filled with aches and his head absorbed in the remembrance of God is alone privileged to utter this praise. To such alone is given in heaven the name of AHMAD. He enjoys nearness of God and is admitted into the abode of dignity and into the "Lofty Mansion." The latter signifies the mansion of majesty and power and may tropically be said to be the seat of the Almighty. The same seat may be said to be awarded to the man who celebrates His praise. Such a man by God's command is praised both in the



# The Tomb of Jesus Christ \*

By

Sufi M. R. Bengalee

\*At the request of the readers of the Moslem Sunrise, this article is being republished, after having been thoroughly revised and enlarged.

The Ahmadiyya version of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is of paramount interest. According to the Ahmadiyya belief, Jesus did not die on the cross. When taken down from the cross, he was still alive in a state of unconsciousness. He was rescued from the sepulchre by his close friends and followers. Medicine was administered to his wounds, and having been restored to health, he made a long trip to Cashmere and died a natural death there at a ripe old age. The picture on page two is that of his tomb, which is situated at Khan Yar Street, Srinagar Cashmere, India.

The followers of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam quote no less than thirty verses from the Holy Quran in proof of their doctrine, that Jesus was saved from the ignominy of the accursed death on the cross.

They advance a number of arguments even from the Bible in support of their claim.

1. *"But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas."*

*"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."* (Matthew 12:39, 40)

In the above verses, Jesus makes the prophecy that the sign of the prophet Jonas will be shown in his case. And the sign of the Prophet Jonas was that he entered into the whale's

---

earth and in the heaven and receives the name of "MUHAMMAD."

This name signifies one who is abundantly praised. Both of these names were especially designed for the Holy Prophet even from the very beginning of the world. But then by way of epithet they are also granted to him who makes himself the reflection of the Holy Prophet. And whoever is given the least part of the attributes signified by these names, has his heart illuminated by a thousand effulgences.

belly alive and came out alive.

This prophecy can be said to have come true, and the sign can be said to have been manifested in the person of Jesus, only if he enters the tomb alive, and comes out alive.

The fulfillment of the prophecy demands that Jesus escapes the accursed death on the cross, and enters into and comes out of the sepulchre alive.

II. The moving prayers of Jesus on the night before the day of crucifixion, which night he passed in extreme restlessness, imploring to God, "O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me," and his heart-rendering cries of agony on the cross. "Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani," "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken me," furnish us with a strong evidence that Jesus was saved from death on the cross. For it is utterly unbelievable that such earnest prayers from no less a personage than Jesus Christ should go unanswered. Even St. Paul bears us out in this contention and says:

*"When he offered up prayers and supplication with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him death and was heard in that he feared."* (Hebrew 5:7)

III. According to the Bible, the death on the cross is an accursed death.

*"For, he that is hanged is accursed of God."* (Deut. 21:23)

How could Jesus, an honoured, beloved and chosen prophet of God, die an accursed death—a punishment inflicted upon thieves and malefactors. It follows, therefore, that God would save him from such a punishment.

IV. After Jesus was taken down from the cross, a spear was pierced into his side, and blood came out.

*"But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."* (John 19:34)

Blood never comes out of a dead body. The oozing of blood is a sure indication and a conclusive proof of the fact that Jesus was still alive.

V. Jesus stayed on the cross for too short a time (only a few hours) to die.

Besides his legs were not broken.

The two thieves crucified along with Jesus did not die when taken down from the cross. Hence, apparently Jesus could not have died so soon.

The following quotations are highly illuminating on this point.

"Rationalism has principally given its adhesion to the former opinion (i. e. Jesus was not really dead). The short time that Jesus

hung on the cross, together with the otherwise ascertained tardiness of death by crucifixion, and the uncertain nature and effects of the wound from the spear, appeared to render the reality of death doubtful. (*Strauss, "Life of Jesus," P. 750*).

"And horrible to relate, the crucified often lived for many hours,—nay, even for two days—in their torture." (*"The Life of Christ," F. H. Farrar, V. 2, P. 423*). On the same page the author places in the minds of the soldiers the thought of the doubt about Jesus' death.

"And yet, though He might be in a syncope—as instances had been known in which men apparently dead had been taken down from the cross and resuscitated—and as the lives of the soldiers would have had to answer for any irregularity, one of the soldiers drove the broad head of his hesta into His side." (*F. H. Farrar, V. 2, P. 423*).

"It is evident, in fact, that doubts arose as to the reality of the death of Jesus. A few hours of suspension on the cross appeared to those accustomed to see crucifixions entirely insufficient to bring about such a result. They cited many instances of persons crucified, who had been removed in time, and brought to life again by energetic treatment. Origen, later on, thought it needful to invoke miracle in order to explain so sudden an end. The same surprise is discovered in the narrative of Mark . . . Pilate was astonished that Jesus was so soon dead." (*"The Life of Jesus, Renan, P. 398-9*)

VI. The Gospel account, as well as all the authentic works on the life of Jesus, are fully agreed upon the extremely sympathetic attitude of Pontius Pilate toward the Nazarene. We are told that the Roman Procurator expressed his conviction of Jesus' faultlessness, and made earnest efforts to secure his acquittal. But, an account of the peculiar and adverse circumstances in which he was placed, he was prevailed upon against his own will to pass upon Jesus the sentence of crucifixion.

A few days before the crucifixion, Pilate's wife distressed by a dreadful dream, in which she "*suffered many things*" on account of Jesus, strongly pleaded with her husband to do something for "*this just man*." (Matthew 21:19)

This intercession of Pilate's wife in behalf of the prophet of Nazareth, in conjunction with his own deep conviction as to Jesus' innocence, is particularly significant. It is evident that the Roman governor would spare no pains to save Jesus when the opportunity arose.

VII. The evening was drawing nigh. The Jews were becoming anxious to remove the crucified body from the accursed tree. They were seriously alarmed lest they should pollute the sanctity of the following day, the day of Sabbath, by allowing it to remain suspended on the cross.

Jesus had a number of secret followers who were men

of wealth and influence. One of these, Joseph of Arimathaea, who was a distinguished member of the Sanhedrin, and a noble man of high character, seeing the life of his beloved master in danger, flung his secrecy to the winds, and boldly came to Pilate and sought Jesus' body. (Mark 14:42, 43) Pilate, who was "the most anxious, if not to spare His agony, at least to save His life," in the words of Farrar, granted Joseph his wish, and delivered unto him his master's body that "he might do with it as he pleased."

Another devoted disciple, Nicodemus, also came forward to render his service to his master at this critical juncture.

Joseph and Nicodemus placed the body of Jesus in a rock-hewn sepulchre, and rolled a great stone against its entrance.

On the third day, lo and behold, the stone was rolled away from the mouth of the tomb and Jesus was gone, to the bewildered surprise of all.

Credulous imagination built up the theory of the so-called resurrection and physical ascension of Jesus to the sky, which, however, belongs entirely to the realm of pure fiction.

I fully agree with the noted Oxonian when he says: "The ordinary view that Jesus rose from the grave with his human body and after showing himself from time to time to his disciples during a period of forty days, *ascended with that body into heaven, cannot be substantiated*, in view of the above discrepancies of the records." (*Story Behind the Gospel*, Bernard M. Allen, P. 107-8)

This physical ascension of Jesus to heaven has never been and never will be proved. Jesus, himself, says, that one who does not come from heaven, cannot go to heaven. (John 3:13)

St. Paul, whose account is supposed to be earliest of all, vigorously opposes the idea of Jesus' physical ascension to heaven. "*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.*" (I Cor. 15:50)

But according to the unanimous testimony of the Gospel records, Jesus was seen by his disciples in "*flesh and blood.*" His mother saw him and took him for a gardener. (John 20:50) His disciples saw him in his physical body.

"*Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*"

"*And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.*"

"*And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered,*

he said unto them, *Have ye here any meat?*"

*"And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb."*

*"And he took it, and did eat before them."* (Luke 24:39-43)

The above verses settle the question decisively that Jesus came out of the tomb alive.

If we make a close scrutiny and a thorough retrospect of the whole story in the light of the foregoing premises—Jesus' prophecy of coming out of the bowels of the earth alive, his fervent prayers to be saved from death on the cross, the hideousness of the idea of his being subject to the accursed death, the flowing of blood from his wound, the shortness of the time of his suspension and the consequent doubts of all concerned at such an unexpectedly early death, the pronounced sympathetic attitude of Pilate and his delivery of Jesus' body to his close friends and followers, and Jesus' subsequent physical appearance to his mother and disciples—then we can easily understand that he was only apparently dead; in a state of unconsciousness. It becomes as clear as crystal that a secret plot was designed by Jesus' disciples for his rescue, in which Pilate himself played an important role. After his escape from the tomb, Jesus had to take recourse to disguise for fear of being arrested again.

Now if Jesus did not die on the cross and did not ascend to heaven, where did he go? This introduces us to the following discussion.

We read in the Bible that Jesus Christ was sent to the lost sheep of Israel. Out of the twelve tribes of Israel, only two were in the country where Jesus taught his Gospels and was crucified. In order to fulfill his mission, Jesus felt that he should go to that country which was inhabited by the remaining tribes of Israel. It surely does not stand to reason to believe that a man, sent to a particular people with such a grand and heavenly message as that of Jesus, comes and lives with a small fraction of that people only for three years, and then goes away. Such a man can on no account be said to have achieved any measure of success in the great mission of his life. Hence, we must admit that either Jesus Christ did not fulfill his mission or he went to that part of the world where were the remaining ten tribes of Israel who undoubtedly were the overwhelming majority.

Historical investigations reveal to us that the people of

Cashmere, India, Afghanistan, and the surrounding provinces represent the ten lost tribes of Israel. Hence, it follows that Jesus must have gone to that part of the world. To prove our contention, we give below a few quotations which corroborate our argument:

1. "On entering the kingdom after crossing the Pire-penjale mountains the inhabitants in the frontier villages struck me as resembling Jews. Their countenance and manner, and that indescribable peculiarity which enables a traveler to distinguish the inhabitants of different nations all seemed to belong to that ancient people. You are not to ascribe what I say to mere fancy, the Jewish appearance of these villagers having been remarked by our Jesuit Father and by several other Europeans long before I visited Cashmere.

"Note No. 3. In recent times visitors to Cashmir seeing the names Rahimju, Lusju, Julju, etc., etc., common ones among the tradespeople who cater to foreign visitors in Srinagar, written up as RAHIM JEW, JUL JEW, JUS JEW, have imagined that the bearers of these names were Jews of nationality! The Jewish cast of features of many of the inhabitants of Cashmir is noted by many modern travelers." (*Bernier's Travels*, P. 430)

2. "... the majority of Eastern writers consider them to be the descendants of one of the ten tribes of Israel—and this is the opinion of the Afghans themselves." (*History of the Afghans*, by J. E. Ferrier, P. 1)

3. "... Ferrier is disposed to believe that the Afghans represent the lost ten tribes, and to claim for them descent from Saul, King of Israel. Amongst other writers concurring in this view may be mentioned the honoured name of Sir William Jones." (*The History of Afghanistan from the Earliest Period to the Outbreak of the War of 1878*, by Colonel G. B. Malletson, C. S. I., P. 39)

4. "The traditions of this people refer them to Syria as the country of their residence at the time they were carried away into captivity by Bukhtunassar (Nebuchadnezzar), and planted as colonists in different parts of Persia and Media. From these positions they, at a subsequent period, emigrated eastward into the mountainous country of Ghor, where they were called by the neighboring peoples 'Bani Afghan' and 'Bani Israil', or children of Afghan and children of Israel. In corroboration of this we have the testimony of the prophet Esdras to the effect that the ten tribes of Israel who were carried into captivity, subsequently escaped and found refuge in the country of Arsareth, which is supposed to be identical with the Hazarah (Cashmere) country of the present day, and of which Ghor forms a part. It is also stated in the *Tabacati Nasri*—a historical work which contains, among other information, a detailed account of the conquest of this country by Changiz Khan—that in the time of the native Shansabi dynasty there was a people called Bani Israil living in that country and that some of them were extensively engaged in trade with the countries around." (*The Races of Afghanistan*, P. 15)

The discovery of the Tomb with the inscription "Yus Asaf" decisively settles the question. There is a tradition

among the people of Cashmere that the tomb belongs to one Yus Asaf—who was a Nabi (Prophet), Shahibzada (Prince). He came there some 1900 years ago from some western country.

A historical work, the *Tarikhi Azami*, written some two hundred years ago, says regarding this tomb:

"The tomb is generally known as that of a prophet. He was a prince who came from a foreign land. He was perfect in piety, righteousness and devotion. He was made prophet by God and was engaged in preaching to the people of Cashmere. His name was Yus Asaf."

The following circumstances prove that Yus Asaf could be none other than Jesus:

1. The word "Yus" is the Hebrew form of Yasa, the Arabic name for Jesus.

Asaf is the Hebrew form of Asaf, the gatherer, so it comes to mean, "Jesus the gatherer," as Jesus came to gather the lost tribes of Israel.

2. He is known as Nabi, a prophet among the Muslims. The word "nabi" occurs only in two languages, Arabic and Hebrew. He could not be a Moslem as none other than the Holy Prophet has been called "Nabi;" so he must be a Hebrew prophet.

3. One of the most striking circumstances is that Yus Asaf gives the name of Bushra (Hebrew and Arabic name for Gospel) to the word he preached as in the following passage in Ikmaluddin, a historical work about a thousand years old.

"Then he began to compare the tree to (Bushra) which he preached to the people, and he likened the spring of water to wisdom and knowledge which he possessed and the birds he compared to the people who swarmed around him and accepted his religion."

Recently we came across an interesting book, "*Mystical Life of Jesus*" by H. Spencer Lewis, which supports the theory that Jesus did not die on the cross. We read on Page 265 thus:

"The storm soon broke and delayed the removal of the body of Jesus for a few hours, but in that time food was given Him, and support was placed under His body to prevent it from pulling too greatly upon the nails which tortured His flesh. The new faithful ones noted with great anxiety that a somber stillness and a numbness was passing over the body, and that gradually Jesus lost consciousness. At the earliest possible moment, when the storm quieted, torches were brought and an examination of the body revealed that Jesus was not dead. The blood flowing from the wounds proved that the body was not lifeless, and so the cross was immediately taken down and his body removed from it. The body was taken to a burial vault owned by Youssef of Arimathaea, which had been built for the care of his family; and being a wealthy man

it was an elaborate and well constructed burial place. The body was placed in a special part of the tomb which had been pre-arranged for its reception, and physicians connected with the Essene Brotherhood were at hand to render every possible assistance in caring for the wounds."

Again we read on Page 269:

"Just before sunrise, Yousef of Arimathaea and other Essenes, who had been hiding nearby approached the tomb when the guards were trying to protect themselves from the rain under the shelter of some cattle houses slightly distant. Using the means they had previously provided, and taking advantage of the laxity of the officials in sealing the doorway properly, they caused this great stone to be thrown over, and the doorway to be opened. When they entered the tomb, they found Jesus resting easily, and rapidly regaining strength and vitality. After an hour the storm ceased sufficiently for the Essenes to escort Him from the Tomb."

Similarly a writer, John Noel, corroborates the discovery of the tomb of Jesus in Srinagar, Kashmir, India in his article entitled, "*The Heavenly High Snow Peaks of Kashmir*" published in the Asia Magazine, October, 1930.

"Immensely strong are those picturesque, broad-shouldered Kashmiri peasants, and yet docile and meek in temperament. One thing about them strikes you with enormous force. They seem more perfectly Jewish than the purest Jews you have ever seen—not because they wear a flowing, cloaklike dress that conforms to your ideas of Biblical garments, but because their faces have the Jewish cast of features. The curious coincidence—or is it a coincidence?—is that there is a strong tradition in Kashmir of connection with the Jews. For a good many years there have been afloat in this land rumors that Christ did not really die upon the cross, but was let down and disappeared to seek lost tribes, and that he came to Kashmir, Ladak and Little Tibet and died and was buried in Srinagar. Kashmir legend, I have been told, contains references to a prophet who lived here and taught, as Jesus did, by "parables"—little stories that are repeated in Kashmir to the present day. Of recent years certain explorers have also come upon traces of this story of the sojourn of Jesus in these regions. In one version of the story he is said to have come to confer and argue with the Buddhist monks on the doctrine of reincarnation during the years of his young manhood, the period of which there is no Biblical record in regard to his whereabouts.

## Islam and Brotherhood

By Charles S. Braden

*Prof. of the History of Religion, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.,  
and Former Christian Missionary to South America*

"And so, brothers and sisters, I plead with you to accept Islam, Islam means peace, Islam means brotherhood, Islam means prosperity. Some of you here tonight are already Moslems. I pray that soon you will all become Moslems, and that all America will come to follow the prophet."



It was a colored man speaking on the occasion of the opening of a Moslem mosque on the south side of Chicago.

It was the president of the congregation who had spoken—Omar Kahn, the missionary in charge had called him. All the converts are apparently given Arabic names. He wore a fez, as did most of the colored men present. The president had begun his address with the Moslem call to prayer; he ended it with a pious ejaculation, in Arabic, to which the assembled company gave back an Arabic response.

There were other speeches. Brother Abdur Rahman, beginning with an Arabic prayer, stressed again the brotherhood and democracy of Islam, pleaded with those present speedily to become Moslems, and ended by saying that he felt like starting a collection. Extracting a bill from his purse, he placed it on the table. Although apparently not planned for originally by the missionary, the idea was well received, and a brother and a sister, each with a fez for a collection plate, circulated among the assembled company. The response was good.

Still other speeches were made, some by "distinguished guests." Each found something to praise in Islam. The constantly recurring note was that of brotherhood. Islam, at least the Ahmadiyya branch here represented, stands strongly for brotherhood. At each repetition of the idea there was a chorus of enthusiastic approval, expressed, of course, in Arabic, *Alhamdulillah*.

Greetings were read from various parts of America. There was a telegram from the Moslems of Detroit, another from the group in Indianapolis. Strangest of all sounded one signed, "The Moslems of Cedar Rapids, Iowa"! Moslem friends from Michigan City were present in person and were loudly applauded when they stood at the leader's request; likewise some from Minneapolis. A group had started to drive through from East St. Louis, but a hundred miles on their way car trouble stopped them.

A letter was read from an Indian Moslem, former president of the All-India Moslem League and member of the London Round-Table Conferences, who had visited Chicago last year. It was a letter of congratulation and encouragement. It praised the faithfulness of the members who had done all the work of cleaning and decorating the place, preparing it for use as a mosque. "A mosque," he said, "is a first essential of a

Moslem community." He rejoiced that the light had already begun to break in America, and voiced the prayer that soon the full light of revelation as found in Islam would penetrate to the furthest corner of America.

"*Alhamdulillah*," responded the congregation.

The missionary in charge, an Indian Moslem—for this particular branch of Islam (the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam) had its rise in India in the latter part of the nineteenth century—rose to make a brief closing address. It was already late—nearly eleven o'clock. "Islam," he said, "stands for brotherhood. It has no color-bar. I was told when I first came to America, 'If you surround yourself with colored folk you will be unable to reach the white people, and if you surround yourself too much with white folk you cannot reach colored folk. Tonight there are both white and colored here. Islam makes no distinction between them. The races must be brought together. In Islam lies the solution of the race problem.

"I am not discouraged," he continued. "We are only a few who have embraced Islam as yet. There will be more. If not tomorrow, then day after tomorrow."

He sounded so sure.

But there was something deeply stirring about the whole thing. It seemed a little affected, the wearing of the fez and the use of Arabic names. The wearers appeared obviously self-conscious, but on the whole seemed to enjoy the distinction that fez and name conferred upon them.

But deeper yet to one observer, a Christian—*there was something challenging about it*. Why should Negroes in America think they must become Moslems to find brotherhood? Why should a mosque be expected to give what they could not find in a Christian church?

Must Negroes become Moslems to find brotherhood in America, overrun as it is with churches bearing the name of Him whose great life dream was the founding of a kingdom of God where brotherhood should be realized? Must Negroes *think* they have to become Moslems to secure this?

If the coming of Moslem missionaries to America, preaching brotherhood, should stimulate Christianity to the practise of what is evidently its ideal, would it not be a good thing if mosques were established in all our great centers? — *Zion's Herald*, March 13, 1935.

# The Ahmadiyya Mission News

**The New Scheme** The New Scheme of Hazrat Mirza Bashirud Din Mahmood Ahmad, the present Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement, has inspired his followers with a new life and dynamic spirit of action. The world-wide activities of the far-flung movement have been co-ordinated, unified, and considerably increased.

**The Special Appeal** The Special Appeal of the blessed Leader of our movement for financial contributions for the working of the New Scheme has met with marvelous success everywhere. We are grateful to Allah and are proud to note that our American mission has displayed an admirable spirit of sincerity and sacrifice in their response to the Special Appeal. We sincerely hope that all the donors will soon fulfill their pledges.

**New Missions** Six new missions are being opened in foreign lands. Missionaries have already been sent to various parts of China and Japan. A new mission has also been established in Kenya Colony, East Africa.

**Ahmadiyya Press** A special feature of the New Scheme is the rapid growth of the Ahmadiyya Press.

The weekly Sunrise has been revived and is being published from Lahore, Punjab, India with remarkable signs of vigour and potentiality.

**Palestine Mission** Maulana Abul Ata Jhullundhary of Haifa mission and the members of the Ahmadiyya movement in Palestine deserve our hearty congratulations upon their success in building a Mosque in Mount Karmal, and in making their Quarterly into a Monthly and in establishing the Ahmadiyya press.

**The London Mission** The London mission seems to have forged ahead of the rest of our foreign missions in their recent outbursts of journalistic enterprise. They have started two papers—one a fortnightly, *The Muslim Times*, the other, *Al-Islam*, a Quarterly magazine. The former is edited by Maulana A. R. Dard, M. A., the Imam of the famous London Mosque, and the latter is published by the student group under the editorship of Mr. M. N. Ahmad, H. A., B. A., and Mr. M. S. Ahmad, B. A. We wish them all lasting success.

**The Moslem Sunrise** Our American publication, *The Moslem Sunrise*, which has been doing a splendid service to the cause of Islam in the West, is now being published regularly. May we make a humble appeal to all its supporters to come forward to help us improve this blessed journal so that we may keep pace with this glorious march of progress?

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## Awakening of Moslems In America

A large number of Syrian Moslems live in various parts of the United States of America. In many cities they have colonized and settled. During recent years they have shown great signs of awakening. Schools have been established to impart to the children the language of their forefathers, and societies have been formed in order to cultivate and develop the culture of Islam.

In this category, the Asrel Jadeed Temple in Michigan City, Indiana, the Mosques in Brooklyn, N. Y., and in Ross, North Dakota stand foremost. We offer our sincere congratulations to those who have accomplished these worthy tasks.

Recently the Moslems of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, built a temple with the characteristic dome of a Moslem Mosque. This will serve the double purpose of a school for the children and of a place of worship and assembly for the adults.

The opening ceremony was celebrated on the 16th of June with great pomp and festivity. Delegates from many cities were present on the occasion.

The small Moslem community in Cedar Rapids has set a splendid example in building this temple. We sincerely hope that others will follow this example, and will serve the great cause of Islam for which there is a vast field in this far-off country of America.

We extend our hearty congratulations to the Moslems in Cedar Rapids upon their noble work. May God bless them abundantly.

# Press Notices

NOTED MOSLEM MISSIONARY  
SPOKE HERE WEDNESDAY

THE STANLEY SUN

Stanley, No. Dak.

June 6, 1935

We, of this community, had an opportunity Wednesday evening to hear a message delivered by a learned man from India, Sufi M. R. Bengalee, M. A. He made a profound impression by his masterly address. Those of us who availed ourselves of the opportunity were well rewarded. Direct from the congested East where three hundred and fifty million people dwell, Mr. Bengalee made it clear how it was possible for these hordes to endure over a period of some six thousand years.

Touching upon the world depression Dr. Bengalee attributed the main cause to the concentration of wealth, an evil which is fast devouring the western civilization. The peril could be guarded against, observed the speaker, through the practice of the economic system of the Islam faith. There are three main principles. First, is the law of inheritance. At death, one third of a man's fortune may go directly to charity while the remainder is distributed among his children and relatives. Thus are great fortunes constantly broken up and wealth re-distributed. The second, is ZAKAT or purifying tax. By this each Moslem pays annually one fortieth of all his surplus wealth for the use of the poor and needy. This alone, remarked the speaker, would largely solve the unemployment problem. The third is the ban on interest; no interest may be paid on loaned money; and business should be conducted on a partnership basis so that gains and losses may be divided between capital and labor. All of these principles taken together would strike at the root of concentration of wealth and a more equitable and a wider distribution of wealth would result.

Antagonism between the different religions is caused not by the founders of the different religions, but by their followers. According to Dr. Bengalee, Islam, which means peace and resignation to the divine will, has been the religion of all the prophets since the dawn of history, and the Moslem believes not only in Mohammed, but in Jesus, Moses, and all the other prophets. Dr. Bengalee made a strong plea for better understanding and harmony between various faiths and peoples. "The East and the West must unite for the common good of humanity," said Dr. Bengalee.

An advancement made by the followers of Islam was, the speaker contends, the founding of a true democracy and universal brotherhood. The Koran says the test of respectability is not the color of a person's skin, but his honesty, integrity and righteousness. Islam has taken slaves and elevated them to royalty, stated the speaker. A single visit to a Mohammedan church would furnish a living picture as to how this faith has exterminated race and color distinction.

The Holy Book, Koran, has raised the status of women. Islam makes a man and his wife equal. Women inherit property, given a sum by the husband at the time of marriage and all her expenses are paid by the husband. Mohammed said that the best man is the one who is most well-behaved to his wife. This situation has been an advance over the rest of the world.

Dr. Bengalee pointed out that whereas the twentieth century America miserably failed in the prohibition of liquor, Mohammed in the seventh century succeeded in establishing complete temperance. Since then wherever Islam has gone drinking has vanished.

We, of this western world, might do well to heed the message of such men as Dr. Bengalee and relax briefly from our

pursuit of happiness and fortune thru the chasing of New Deals and other too complex programs. It would seem that if our main ailment lies in the concentration of wealth, our salvation would lie in its wide and equitable distribution. We might do well to adopt an economic system similar to the Islamic teaching, or we might gain control of the liquor question by the practice of temperance.

There are still people who believe that worth-while reforms must come from the East, from whence rises the sun, and after listening to Dr. Bengalee, we believe that the East has some doctrines that would do well if transplanted here.

#### MICHIGAN CITY EVENING DISPATCH

Thursday, August 9, 1934

#### NOTED MOSLEM LEADER VISITS IN CITY; SPEAKS HERE SUNDAY

"To know your fellow man, to understand your fellowman, to grasp the import of the unity of religion as a thing apart from man-made creeds, to know that religious disputes and the troubles of the world arise through misunderstanding and misinformation," thus the words and preaching of Sufi Mutiur Rahman Bengalee, M. A., head of the Ahmadiyya Moslem movement in America, who will be speaker on Sunday at 8 p. m. in the Asser El Jadeed temple on Second street, choosing then as his subject a general explanation of the truth of the Koran, the inspired word as heard by Mohammed, who, living 570 years after Jesus, had the results of his clairaudience taken down by the pens of his followers, and memorized by them, and their students also, so that no word of error has crept in through the years in the Koran.

#### Distinguished Man

Sufi Bengalee, who is a man of powerful individuality, intelligence and product of the higher schools of learn-

in, a graduate of Punjab college at Lahore, India, and of the University of Calcutta, has spent some six years in the United States as head of the missionary work in this country. He is the editor of a quarterly magazine, picturesquely called "The Moslem Sunrise," founded by Dr. M. M. Sadiq.

In the delightful coolness of the porch of Nefew Sam, 808 Tennessee, last evening, and with the hospitality of cooling water and luscious fruits, Mr. Sam presented his distinguished guest to representatives of the press.

Speaking in St. Paul, Minn., in February of this year, as reported in the Dispatch newspaper of that city, the doctor pointed out, as he will here, that the system of his teachings is not merely sentimental idealism, but is based upon sound economic principles. The three laws of Islam contain the solution of present-day American economic problems. There are riches here, yet also want, the reason concentration and lack of distribution. The Islamic laws of inheritance which give a widely spread distribution of wealth with three generations solves this problem of capitalism without resort to communism or socialism.

The Islamic law of Zakat, a 2½ per cent tax upon all a man possesses over and above actual need, takes care of those less well placed, and is not charity. It is the law. The third law is the ban on usury, when money may not be loaned out at interest. Partnership in capital and labor, equality of women and men which is recognized and practiced in the Moslem law, will and can lead to the peace of the world.

#### By Peace, Not Sword

Sufi Bengalee comes with the message of peace and not the sword. He says that he finds response great when those who hear him have grasped the import of his message. He explains the Christ as he explains the Prophet Mohammed.

With him he carries reports from papers throughout the land which make his erudition and knowledge of the difficulties of the races to amalgamate in thought and spirit evident, and in his words he says, "The people are seeking the divine knowledge, they crave the certainty of spirituality, materialism and the results of men's writings and readings do not satisfy, there is spiritual hunger. They want the knowledge of the divine law and power which has been given to the earth since the beginning of time."

Sufi Bengalee is a guest of Neffew Sam, and will be presented to a large audience of all creeds and faiths on Sunday at the local temple.

#### MICHIGAN CITY EVENING DISPATCH August 13, 1934

#### MISSIONARY TO INDIANA SPEAKS AT ASSER EL JADEED TEMPLE ANNIVERSARY

Speaking as a missionary of Islam, wrongly termed Mohammedanism, Sufi Mutiur Rahman Bengalee, M. A., noted writer and speaker from Chicago and India, last night at the Asser El Jadeed temple, W. Second, helped in the celebration of the anniversary of the opening of that building.

The missionary explained fully that the religion of Islam combined the beliefs of all other religions and consequently its adoption throughout the world would remove possibilities of disagreement.

"The world of religion is in a state of chaos, Christianity in the United States alone has 500 sects, and other religions are similarly disrupted," said Sufi Bengalee. "Islam is not a faith founded by Mohammed alone, but is a true and ungarbled account of the teachings of Adam, of Moses, of Jesus."

#### Islam Means Submission

Explaining that the correct name for those who accept the teaching Islam, is Moslem, Sufi Bengalee went on to say that Islam means 'submission' or attainment of a life of peace through resignation to the will of God, or as the teacher Christ said, "Thy will be done."

"Men have become corrupted and religions degenerated through misinterpretation and mis-information," continued the speaker, "as evidences of corruption came on earth then God sent further teachers to expound His will, and make clear the way. Unfortunately many misunderstandings have arisen."

Summing up the religious conception of requirements for "peace on earth," Sufi Bengalee stated, "We need knowledge and understanding of other peoples, if we want to establish peace."

#### Story Illustrates Point

Illustrating his story aptly with the tale of the man in the jungle who saw something approaching and was terrified as he thought it a bear, coming closer the "thing" proved to be a black man, again frightened, the "thing" once more resolved itself into a man like the observer, and upon a close meeting the observer discovered that it was his own brother who had approached.

Thus with metaphor and a fine flow of language, a command of English which was marked in quality, Sufi Bengalee brought home to his 150 listeners that with the understanding of nations, made possible through such as the League of Nations, the spreading of one religious belief, there can come that fine knowledge as between man and man which will do away with wars and economic troubles.

George Dabagia introduced the speaker. Mr. Dabagia was preceded by Neffew Sam, who spoke in both English and Arabic.

# Correspondence

Inglewood, California.  
June 22, 1935.

Sufi M. R. Bengalee, M. A.,  
Suite 1307, 56 E. Congress Street,  
Chicago, Illinois.

My Dear Brother:

Since my early years, I have been a seeker after truth in quest of which I have unceasingly studied the sacred books of all religions with extreme delight and much benefit. They all have widened my intellectual and spiritual outlook and highly uplifted me, for I found truth in them all. But my spiritual hunger was not completely satisfied until I contacted Islam.

Even as a child I never could reconcile myself to the orthodox Christian version of Jesus Christ. I found it inconsistent with divine perfection and love that God would send His only son down to the earth out of heaven to crucify him for me or for anyone else. This and similar doctrines—Trinity, Godhead of Christ and that man has been born in sin and shaped in iniquity milled and milled around in my mind until I discovered that Islam gives true conception of Christ and his faith, and, instead of taking anything from our love and honor for him, infinitely adds to His glory and honor by making him a man and a great prophet of God.

Nor do any other faiths suffer. The Moslem believes in the fundamental and basic unity of all religions and honors all prophets, such as Buddha, Krishna, Abraham, Zoroaster and Confucius.

Does the Bible gain or lose by being supplemented by the Quran? It seems to me that the Bible gains, as the Quran completes the previous teachings and seeks to bring them back to their pristine purity after they have lost their original thoughts.

Does woman gain or lose by the standards of Islam? And here I pause to smile, for, really does the Bible give us much to lose in personality and position? The answer to the question came to me that we are still paying for giving the apple to Adam. Even the virgin Mary is robbed of any special attention in the protestant departures. In Islam we find that the status of the weaker sex is exalted and their rights safeguarded and they are immeasurably more elevated in social, intellectual, and spiritual spheres. Thus by its golden teachings and principles, Islam does away with the age-long conflict between the opposite sexes.

Does capital fall and perish or labor lose its identity, or does each retain its proper place? In my opinion, each one would, under Islam, automatically find its own place, for under the system of Islam the money of the wealthy man stands side by side with the labor of the poor man and each shares and shares alike. Also, the mind of a poor man has a chance to place its power and plans into partnership with the money of him who is the possessor of wealth.

Now I come to the heart of the question: Does Islam satisfy the mind and soul of mankind? That of course must be an individual



# Address Given on the Goodwill Program Sunday May 12, 1935 Hammond, Indiana Station WWAE

By Sufi M. R. Bengalee

I am exceedingly happy to have this occasion to participate in the Goodwill Program. I have dedicated my life to the great cause of humanity. Deep down in my heart, I feel that life would have no charm for me—life would not be worth living unless I could devote it to bringing peace upon earth and goodwill to man.

To this end, the best gift that I can offer and the highest wisdom that I can expound unto you is the philosophy of Islam

problem. Speaking for myself, I can say with the certainty of conviction that it does unsurpassingly. Islam is my proudest possession. It fills my heart with a warm and loving peace. I love the continual living of Islam—daily prayers that are made an integral part of our life, not a confining of our worship to one day a week. True God life must be constantly lived. Every detail of our daily conduct must be attuned to the will of God. Unity of God must be made the experience of every man. Then, life becomes so true, beautiful and abundant.

All through Islam runs one theme—God—and His Love—purging—and—purifying. Prayer is the vital part of Islam. God is the head, and prayer the medium of contact and unfoldment. And as we blend our will with that of God, He uses us for His work, then we know bliss. That is the kingdom of heaven. It comes through self-purification.

The Islamic books which I constantly peruse are veritable wells of inspiration to me. They bring me a fund of inexhaustible joy and happiness.

Before closing, I want to pay my tribute to the Moslem Sunrise. It brings so much warmth to the heart and furnishes so much food for spiritual uplift. I should like to see it go each month with its radiant and throbbing message, flooding the whole western world with its golden light like the rising sun.

I close with, "All Praise Belongs to Allah!"

Very sincerely yours,

Sister Raheema.

—resignation unto the will of God. The supreme mission of our life upon this plane is to fulfill the Divine plan. This is the essence, the sum-total, and the length and breadth of all religions that have been preached upon the earth since the dawn of time.

God has endowed us with infinite powers and dynamic spiritual qualities by the proper cultivation, development and unfoldment of which we can become His manifestations. These glowing qualities that we possess are the Divine attributes—qualities akin to God. The more we demonstrate these mysterious qualities and attributes in our own selves, the more we become righteous, the more we taste the wonders of spiritual life, its thrills and joys. This is the life of resignation unto the will of God—the life of perfect peace and eternal happiness.

I am a profound believer in a personal God, in this sense, that every man must realize his own God, must have direct dealings with God. Every man must establish personal kinship with God; must let God reveal Himself through the life and action of the individual. Every man must find God in the solution of his tangled problems, upon this side of the grave. It is not hard to do so. God is within our reach. The human heart is the throne of God. Only we must mould ourselves into the divine plan—unto the will of the one and only God,—the living God of all faiths and people.

When we will succeed in this supreme task and attain this supreme goal, the sun of peace and goodwill will at once rise on the horizon with the effulgence of celestial light. This is the state in which man is united with God and is the highest point of spiritual evolution.

This unity of God and man must be manifested in the unity of all mankind. A glance into the physical plane of the universe makes it abundantly evident that there is a divine design for peace and unity among all humanity. As a result of the marvelous development of the means of transportation and communication and similar other facilities, the heterogeneous nations and races of the earth are rapidly tending to become, as it were, the members of one big family. The whole world is tending to become a large city. It is imperative upon us, therefore, to recognize this divine purpose of world wide human unity and to constitute ourselves the instruments through which it may be fulfilled. We cannot accomplish any success in this magnificent purpose without promoting better understanding among conflicting groups of mankind. The

world is greatly divided by misunderstanding, prejudice, bias and intolerance. This situation is a story of tragedy. In many instances, the world which must be the kingdom of God and a heaven, is a living hell.

The principal cause of this melancholy state of affairs is our appalling ignorance especially about others. The most amazing discovery that we can make is the discovery of our ignorance. The only way by which we can build bridges of understanding over the chasm of misunderstanding, disunity and prejudice is liberal education. We must adopt various means and methods by which we can have first hand information and gain true knowledge concerning other people, their customs and traditions. This will lead us not only to better mutual understanding but to better mutual respect and appreciation. Then the startling revelation will be made to us that all the different people of the earth are about the same in all essential particulars. Intolerance will be removed and a new earth and a new heaven will be created in which peace, harmony and goodwill will reign supreme.

The service of humanity is the third great means by which we can foster peace, harmony, brotherhood and goodwill. Today is Mother's Day. This day is set aside for acknowledgment of the love and respect and gratitude in which mothers should be held. Since the beginning of time, due tribute was paid by the Holy Prophet Mohammad when he said, "Heaven lies beneath the feet of mothers." I am sure no greater tribute can be paid.

It is fitting that I take this occasion to pay my humble tribute to mothers by making the statement that we must all turn mothers. I am not speaking biologically. I am speaking spiritually by way of illustrating my point. To me the ideal of the service of humanity is the mother's service. Like a mother we must serve man with unlimited love, without the slightest tincture of selfishness.

Nature has been described in Oriental literature as mother. This is another way of paying tribute to mother. Here again we can take a supreme lesson. The sun will give us a lesson, the moon will give us a lesson, the stars, the earth — all the objects of nature will give us a lesson. Just as all these bodies of the universe are serving humanity without the least thought of remuneration—unselfishly, regardless of cast, creed, color, or country, so also must we devote our lives to

the service of humanity.

In short, a life of resignation unto the will of God, the promotion of mutual understanding, appreciation, respect and love through liberal education and unselfish mother-like and nature-like service of our fellowman will mark the beginning of a new epoch of peace and goodwill.

In the end, I bid you good night with affectionate best wishes and with our joyous greeting, Assalamo Alaikum, peace be unto you.

## The Moslem Prayer

By

Muhammad Ahmad

There is but small doubt that the Western World is becoming more conscious of the efficacy of prayer. Above the conflict of economic strife in the United States and throughout the countries of Europe, strong-minded men and women are reaching out for a closer contact with God. It is in prayer that they find their most perfect solace and strength to face the problems with which they are daily confronted.

Islamic teachings are the highest exemplification of this part of man's progress in life. The Islamic mode of worship not only shows man how to pray, but extends to him a means whereby the work of his daily life and his spiritual thought are blended into a perfect expression with God. It teaches him that physical acts, as well as inner prayer, are indispensable to spiritual progress.

Ameerul Mumineen Khalifatul Massih II, Mirza Bashir Uddin Mahmud Ahmad, present head of the Ahmadiyya Movement at Qadian, India, substantiates this idea in the following quotation from the Qur'an:

*"It is only right that men should demonstrate veneration for the places where God's glory was manifested, for righteousness of the heart does naturally express itself outwardly."* (XII:32)

He explains that physical attitudes act and react on the mind, and the condition of the mind reacts on the outward condition of the body.

According to Islam, there are five modes of worship:

(1) *Salat*, which is the chief of Islamic prayers and may be called the soul of all Islamic worship.

(2) *Zikr*, or the remembrance of God throughout the day, while man is engaged in his business or individual pursuits.

(3) *Fasting*, at certain times during the year, which brings man into a deeper appreciation of his Spiritual blessings.

(4) *Pilgrimage to Mecca*, which occurs at least once during the life of a true Moslem.

(5) *Sacrifice*, which teaches the supreme value of unselfishness.

These five practices have led the rest of the world to openly admit that the Moslem is more devout about his prayer, than any of his fellowmen. And it is a fact, that the daily life of a Moslem is an inspiration to anyone.

His prayer (*Salat*) is performed five times in the course of each twenty-four hours—first, in the morning before dawn; second, at high noon; third, in the afternoon; fourth, at sunset; and fifth, again at night before he retires.

A portion of the *Salat*, which is the essence of his prayer, is generally performed in a congregation, with the idea in mind that brotherhood is thereby fostered. In order that they be brought together in congregation, a voice from the minaret of the Mosque, repeats the *Azan*, or call to prayer.

Before the Moslem performs *Salat*, he performs certain ablutions, washing his hands, face, forearms and feet, according to the prescribed manner. This is called *Wuzu*. It is not only conducive to physical cleanliness and purity, but cleans the thought in preparation to prayer.

He then stands with face towards the Ka'ba at Mecca, to remind him of the sacrifices of Abraham in the path of God, and the good which resulted from them.

During the course of *Salat*, the worshiper must, at different stages, stand with folded arms, bow down with his hands on his knees, stand erect with his arms hanging by his side, prostrate himself on the ground and sit with folded legs. All these movements are symbols of perfect humility and surrender. They are a sign of reverence and unity with the one Supreme Power of the Universe.

Thus, a Moslem's inner prayer is brought into perfect combination with his outer prayer.

The true Moslem will not only spend his time in worship at these particular times during the day, upon Friday, which is his Sabbath, but he will also take his prayer into his individual and material pursuits; in short, he will take his prayer

into every channel of his life, whether it be business or pleasure.

As his material and spiritual energies are, at times, depleted in these daily pursuits, Islam has taught that man must, at these certain times, turn to God and refresh himself with His ever-running fountain of spiritual Good. In this manner, the circle of contact with God is never broken.

This second mode of worship prescribed by Islam, is *Zikr* or remembrance of God.

The Western world, in its search for Truth, might well take example of this methodical manner in which the true Moslem approaches the problem of prayer. Many who, for example, would eschew the thought of being haphazard in their individual business or vocation, are particularly lax when it comes to prayer. They forget that system and order are conducive to the right spiritual contact with God.

The Islamic mode of worship is productive of the highest good. Its system is regular. Under this system of worship, prayer ceases to be haphazard and unfolds to man as a beautiful revelation.

## Arabia Before Islam

### II

By

Sufi M. R. Bengalee

**The Days of Ignorance** Arabia was steeped in grossest barbarity during the centuries before the advent of Islam. The Arab historians designate that period as the "days of ignorance". We will give below a brief description of the conditions prevailing in Arabia during that Dark Age.

**Religious Conditions—Idolatry** The religion of Abraham and Ishmael — the worship of One God was corrupted by the succeeding generations who gradually fell into idolatry so that by the time of Muhammad, the sanctuary Kaaba which was originally dedicated to One Supreme Being became a pantheon of many deities. History tells

ns that the holy shrine alone housed three hundred and sixty idols. Besides those in the Kaaba, every clan had its own tribal deities.

**Introduction of Idolatry in Arabia** The great authority *Ibn Hisham* tells us how idolatry was introduced in Arabia. Amr Ibn Luhayy of the tribe of Khuja'a who was the guardian of the Kaaba, made a business trip from Mecca to Syria whence he brought to Mecca an idol which he set up near the Kaaba and induced people to offer worship unto it.

Others followed his example and brought their own idols and implanted them round the holy temple.

From Mecca, the practice of idolatry overspread the whole of Arabia and heathenism completely conquered the pure faith established by Abraham and Ishmael.

The Arab believed in the existence of God, but thought that it was not possible for them to reach Him save through the intermediation of idols.

**Other Religions** Though the principal religion in Arabia during the Dark Age was idolatry, there were other religions besides it.

**Atheism** Some of the pagan Arabs did not believe in the existence of God but attributed the origin of things to nature. Still there was another class of people who were believers in God but did not believe in the life to come nor in the Divine judgments of actions.

**Sabaeanism** From an early period, Sabaenism, or the worship of the heavenly planets existed in Arabia. Sacrifices were offered to sun, moon, stars and other heavenly bodies.

**Hanifs** Though Arabia was generally under the sway of gross idolatry, the light of monotheism was not completely extinguished. There was a small group of people called Hanifs, who condemned and abstained from idol-worship and other pagan customs and sought to follow the true religion of Abraham.

**Christianity and Judaism** Christianity and Judaism were also prevalent in Arabia. Najran was the center of Christianity and Khaibar and Yathrib (later Medina) were the strongholds of the Jews.

Both these religions, however, exerted but little influence.

Sir William Muir says:

"After five centuries of Christian evangelization, we can point to but a sprinkling here and there of Christian converts. . . . Judaism vastly more powerful, had exhibited spasmodic efforts at proselytism; but as an active and converting agent, the Jewish faith was no longer operative. In fine, viewed in a religious aspect, the surface of Arabia had been now and then gently rippled by the feeble efforts of Christianity; the sterner influences of Judaism had been occasionally visible in a deeper and more troubled current; but the tide of indigenous idolatry and Ishmaelite superstition, setting strongly from every quarter toward Kaaba, gave ample evidence that the faith and worship of Mecca held the Arab mind in rigorous and undisputed thralldom."

**The Position of Women** The women of pagan Arabia occupied a very low position.

The birth of a female child was regarded as a calamity. The Holy Quran vividly describes it as follows: "*When a female child is announced to one of them, his face darkens wrathfully; he hides himself from the people because of the bad news, thinking: 'Shall I keep the child to my disgrace or cover it away in dust?'*" (XVI—59-61)

The barbarous custom of burying infant girls alive was prevalent. Women were deprived of the right of inheritance, but were the inherited property of their stepsons, who could make them their wives and dispose of them at their will.

The veil was unknown. Women lived, promiscuously intermingling with men.

The pagan Arab women were free to chose their husbands, but after marriage they were used as chattels or slaves. They could be divorced a thousand times and taken back by their husbands.

Polyandry was practiced, and as for polygamy, a man could marry an unlimited number of wives. Two blood sisters could be married to the same man at the same time. In addition to the plurality of wives, a man could keep as many sweet-hearts as he pleased.

On the other hand, the pagan Arab woman had a keen sense of honour and loyalty, and inspired the poet to sing and the warriors to fight. The pre-Islamic women of Arabia cultivated the art of poetry and renowned poetesses were not unknown.

**Moral Conditions** During the days of ignorance, the Arabs were submerged in moral degradation. Drinking and gambling were rampant. They exulted in immorality and practiced plundering and robbery as professions.



Slavery was the basis of the whole social structure.

**Warfare** Bloodshed was a daily occurrence. With the pagan Arabs, blood revenge was a necessity based on their code of honor, and for trifling causes, warfare raged incessantly and continued for centuries, so that the pre-Islamic history of Arabia is a record of deadly tribal feuds and constant guerrilla warfares.

**Political Conditions** The pre-Islamic Arabs had no government worthy of the name. They were divided and subdivided into numerous petty tribes and clans, each with its head whose powers, however, were very limited. His chief prerogative consisted of conducting all affairs relative to warfare. Otherwise the tribe, the clan and the individual maintained their independence which was as dear to the Arabs as life itself. By the time of Muhammad, the peninsula was in a state of hopeless political disunity. The authority already quoted, says:

"The prospects of Arabia before the rise of Mahomet were as unfavorable to religious reform as they were to political union or national regeneration."

**Virtues** Notwithstanding their vices, the Arabs of the Dark Age, possessed many virtues which made them famous in the annals of mankind.

**Loyalty** The Arab was loyal and true to his word. He would defend with his life the covenant to which he was solemnly pledged. The following story abundantly illustrates this point:

The reputed prince and poet Imra-ul-Qays fled from his enemy, the King of Hira and took refuge with Samawal in his castle. Before his departure, the poet left his five coats of mail in charge of the owner of the castle. Afterward the King of Hira sent an army to Samawal and demanded that he surrender the armor. Samawal refused to betray the trust committed to him and defended himself in the castle. Meanwhile, the enemies captured his son and said that unless Samawal would deliver the armor they would kill his son. Samawal answered, "Do with him as you please, I will never break my pledge nor give up the property of my guest." So they took his son's life.

**Hospitality** To an Arab, hospitality is inviolable. It is a part and parcel of his being. No race has yet approached him in his unbounded generosity. He defends his

guests at the peril of his own life and shares his last morsel with his deadly enemy.

The ideal of Arabian generosity and hospitality is personified in Hatim of Tayyi.

There are many anecdotes of his extravagant liberality. One is that Hatim entertained his three guests by slaughtering three camels and at the time of their departure, he divided the whole of his herd among them, each of whom went with ninety-nine camels.

**Other Virtues** Courage and bravery in battle, patience in misfortune, grim resolution, unshaken devotion to and tender affection for kith and kin, protection of the weak, defiance of the strong, and contempt for death are the characteristic Arab virtues.

**Education** According to our conception, there was no education in pagan Arabia. Though the art of writing was not entirely unknown, the peninsula was in a state of appalling ignorance and illiteracy, with noticeable exceptions here and there.

**Poetry** Side by side with the ignorance which prevailed throughout the country, poetry flourished. The pre-Islamic Arabs developed the art of poetry, refinement of their language, and eloquence to a degree almost unsurpassed.

**The Poet** The poet occupied an unique and important position in society, and wielded dominant influence. "The pagan shair (poet), was the oracle of his tribe, their guide in peace and their champion in war. It was to him they turned for counsel when they sought new pastures. Only at his word would they pitch or strike their "houses of hair," and when the tired and thirsty wanderers found a well and drank of its water and washed themselves, led by him they may have raised their voices together and sung, like Israel:

"Spring up, o well, sing ye unto it."

The rise of a poet was regarded as good luck as he was supposed to immortalize their glory, honour and renown, and it was celebrated with great pomp.

**Ukaz** Eloquence and poetry were much cherished for accomplishments which most Arabs strove to acquire. At Ukaz, near Mecca, was held an annual fair in which a kind of national assembly was convened for poetical contests. The choicest productions were recited in rivalry. The best pieces were written in letters of gold and were hung in the Kaaba.

**Seven Suspended Poems** The seven suspended poems which have won undying fame have been handed down to us as masterpieces of pre-Islamic poetry.

**Memory** The Arabs were by nature, endowed with exceedingly strong, retentive memory. Pre-Islamic poetry has been preserved and handed down to us by oral tradition only. There was Rawis or reciters whose profession it was to commit poems to memory. It is related that Hammad said to Caliph Walid B. Yazid, "I can recite to you, for each letter of the alphabet, one hundred long poems, without taking into account short pieces, and all that composed exclusively by poets before the promulgation of Islam."

In the same way the genealogists carried in their amazing memories pedigrees which could be traced to the father of mankind.

*Note: Our next issue will deal with what Muhammad accomplished.*

## COMMENTS AND APPRECIATIONS

"The Moslem Sunrise, a quarterly journal, edited by Sufi Mutiur Rahman Bengalee, M. A., the Missionary of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, is an excellent organ of the Moslem Cause in this country. Its aims and ideals are highly spiritual, and it seeks to establish peace through the world. The journal is published in Chicago, Illinois."

Dharma, the Organ of the All-World Ghandi Fellowship, New York City

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